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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000551

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PHUM PREL ASEC GV

SUBJECT: FULANI YOUTHS DISCUSS ANTI-DADIS MOVEMENT AND SECURITY CONCERNS

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. A group of Fulani youth leaders who identified themselves as the organizers of recent anti-Dadis demonstrations in Conakry told A/DCM of their plans to organize more such demonstrations in the weeks ahead. They cited ongoing concerns about security and claimed that the CNDD is actively training civilian "death squads" with the intention of loosing them on any crowds of anti-Dadis protestors. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On September 11, A/DCM met with a group of seven self-selected youth leaders from the Bambeto, Hamdallaye, and Cosa areas of Conakry. The group had requested the meeting and later identified themselves as the organizers of the anti-Dadis/pro-USG rally in front of the Embassy on August ¶31. The Bambeto-Hamdallaye-Cosa (BHC) corridor continues to be the epicenter of both violent and non-violent demonstrations in the capital. It is a predominantly Peuhl (Fulani) neighborhood.

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THE YOUTHS IN THE STREETS  
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¶3. (C) Each of the youth leaders represented different organizations, all of which have apparently come together to form some kind of broader coalition. They described their mission as one of "effecting change." At one point, a representative said that CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara has made the socio-political situation absolutely intolerable. "We are working to mobilize everyone in order to force Dadis out," another said.

¶4. (C) When asked how they plan to effect change, the youths said they focus on civic sensitization campaigns, conferences, and demonstrations. According to the youths, some of the demonstrations that occur in the BHC corridor are spontaneous, but others are planned in advance. They said they prefer to plan the demonstrations because they can then try and ensure that the participants adhere to principles of non-violence. "We want to make sure that they understand that they should not steal or break anything...if we do so, we will fail," one said.

¶5. (C) The youths had apparently planned a demonstration for September 7, but said it had ultimately failed because the CNDD heard about it and started threatening people and buying off others. All of the youths claimed that anonymous phone calls threatening death or arrest are commonplace, but that youths are not the only targets. They described how the CNDD mobilizes market women to support Dadis by sending Red Berets (military) into the markets to threaten them with closure if they fail to rally in support of the CNDD.

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SECURITY CONCERN

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¶ 16. (C) Security seemed to be a major concern for the youths.

They commented on frequent arrests and other methods of intimidation. According to the group, five youths were arrested on August 31 in connection with the demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy. These youths were reportedly detained for 72 hours, but were not mistreated while in detention. One youth added that they were only aware of the five from their groups, but that other groups may also have had individuals arrested.

¶ 17. (C) On the same theme, the youths claimed that the CNDD had sent 2000 youths from the Forest Region, all from the Guerze tribe, to Forecariah to be trained as "death squads." According to the group, these youths will be kept in civilian attire, but are being armed with primitive weapons such as spears and bows and arrows. The group commented that the CNDD wants to avoid using firearms because they are too audible and conspicuous. Rather, the CNDD plans to send these death squads into large crowds where they can stab and maim protestors without the sound of gunfire. The group claimed that during the August 31 demonstration, some Red Berets were seen carrying spears and other such weapons. In addition, the youths stated that the CNDD is actively recruiting former Liberian combatants into the Guinean Armed Forces.

¶ 18. (C) The group mentioned that Dadis held a meeting with youths the in the middle of the night on September 6 where he reportedly warned youths "my democracy is weapons and if you do not want my democracy, you will feel what it means." The

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youth took this statement as a death threat.

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THE OTHER SIDE  
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¶ 19. (C) When asked about the size and credibility of the pro-Dadis movements, namely the MDDR (Movement for Dadis to Stay), the youths scoffed, describing them as opportunists. One commented that these youths are essentially voices for hire. "They were with Kouyate yesterday, with Conte the day before that, and now they are with Dadis," he said. Another added, "If I were to find myself in power tomorrow, they would support me too."

¶ 10. (C) The group described how these pro-Dadis youths essentially support the highest bidder, claiming that the CNDD has distributed millions of Guinean francs to buy support. In response to a question about the size of the group, the youths said that the pro-Dadis movement does not have more than 100 members. They added that because the MDDR could not mobilize enough bodies on August 31, they ended up bringing in teenage and adult children of military personnel as well as active duty military personnel in civilian attire.

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THE NEXT DEMONSTRATION  
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¶ 11. (C) The youths claimed that they are currently planning a demonstration for September 26.

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COMMENT  
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¶ 12. (C) This group of youths seemed markedly different from some of the Embassy's other youth contacts. Although they claimed to be teachers and students, most members of the group did not come across as deep thinking intellectuals. Rather, they appeared to be the mass mobilizers who follow the leadership of some of the more prominent youth activists,

such as Mouctar Diallo or Dansa Kourouma. These may also be the groups that sometimes accept bribes and switch sides, which is reportedly commonplace.

¶13. (C) Although the group claimed to be multi-ethnic, their names were predominantly Peuhl. In addition, they hail from neighborhoods that are commonly viewed as exclusively Peuhl. The comments about the CNDD mobilizing Forestiers echo other reports the Embassy has received in recent weeks. They contribute to concerns about a possibly violent clash between these groups. END COMMENT.

BROKENDSHIRE